

Michelle Post



What If...

Polly Anna Series Book 3

What if...

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***Cover art by KP Designs**

Dedicated to all who have lost their lives
while doing what we love to do...having
our tails in the sky

Thank you for your
interest in my work
Please return this on

Share. Warmly
Matthew Poole

Chapter 1

Grant and I sat in the office of Max Diamond while he arranged some paperwork.

I looked around the rather austere surroundings where Max did his work. For a man who dressed impeccably, he picked a very unpretentious place to do business.

He looked well, much better than the day on the plane when he was wheeled off to the emergency room.

The office was diminutive with dark wood paneling on the walls which I had not seen

since the late 70's. Even then, I did not really like it. I used to wonder who thought of such a peculiar way to decorate.

This was so atypical from any other attorney's office I had been in the past. Usually lawyers attempt to put on a much more imposing air. However, Max had been a detective. It was obvious his attention was focused on his work rather than the ornamentation where he conducted his profession.

After introducing Max to Grant, we sat and anxiously waited to see what he had found concerning Jacob.

Chapter 2

I will always remember the look of hope when I told Grant that I had someone looking for his son, and he had actually found him. It was shortly before takeoff from Newark on our way to Italy.

“I know we are on shaky ground, as far as trust is concerned.” I said to him. “And, I have not told you this before because I did not want you to have false hope.”

Grant and I had been through an ordeal, to say the least. Some of the things from my past, that I felt were not important, seemed to rear their ugly head at a very inopportune time. It had caused a rift in

my relationship with Grant, just before Thanksgiving.

Due to the wise interjection of my friend Meredith, Grant came to understand something that quite frankly; I would have had a hard time believing, had it not happened to me.

When I had called her to thank her, she simply said, "You saved my marriage, one good turn deserves another." I could feel her smiling from miles away. "Oh, and by the way, you have a great guy there."

Meredith had taken the chance to contact Grant in the 11th hour to let him know that my 'friend' Felix was simply an extravagant philanthropic being. He and I had collaborated on several situations with people we did not know, to help them out of extraordinarily difficult situations.

In fact, as I sat on the plane with Grant and told him about Max Diamond, I could see Felix looking back at me from the first row. He gave his customary half wave, letting me know of his presence.

Trouble is, only I seem to be able to see him. His presence on this aircraft was not anything I could share with Grant, at least not at this particular moment.

Chapter 3

Grant could see that I was distracted. “Do you see someone on this plane that you know?” He questioned.

“I do,” I said reluctantly. “He was on my flight a long time ago.” I did not want to explain Felix right now. He would look, and of course not see him. The explanation of my relationship with Felix could wait. He needed to know about Max Diamond.

“Grant, I had a passenger about a month ago who had a medical emergency.”

“I remember you telling me.” he confirmed.

"Well, it turned out that he is a private investigator/attorney. He was once a detective with the Chicago police department. He is affectionately known as 'the bloodhound.' He found me after contacting the airlines. He offered his services pro bono, thanking me for my assistance when he fell ill on our plane."

Grant was putting it together and moving in closer to me, eager for more information.

"Just before I left for the airport, he called. He said he has found your son, Jacob."

Chapter 4

I have seen many emotions over the months Grant and I had been involved. I had seen passion, love, anger, and compassion. Today it was very different.

Grants eyes immediately filled with tears. He was unaware of our surroundings. I was sure that for the moment he had forgotten we were on a plane headed to Italy.

“Where?” is all he could mutter. I was sure that he had a million questions. His look was one of disbelief and fear. Fear that once again he would be lead down a dead end.

I placed my hand over his and gave it a reassuring squeeze.

“I really do not know any of that. And, maybe it will be hard to leave. If you want to we can get off the plane right now. I certainly understand. However, Max had reassured me that it could wait until we returned. In fact, Max called when he was leaving for the airport himself. He will not be back for several days.”

Grant was not talking. He was sitting back and very quiet. I could see the muscle in his cheek moving.

“If he is not there, we may as well go on. Give me a minute, Olivia; it has been one hell of a day.”

Chapter 5

Grant and I went on to have a romantic, wonderful time in Italy.

While being rocked on a gondola in the waters of Venice, we promised to always give each other the benefit of the doubt. It would be hard in the heat of the moment, but we promised. No matter what the circumstances, we would hear each other out.

In the halls of the Vatican we vowed to have a buzz word. We would use this when we needed to remind each other that our relationship was more important

than the matter at hand. We agreed on the word '*sojourn.*' It was not common enough to be overlooked, and simply meant 'stop.'

Chapter 6

When we returned to the States we were able to spend a night in my house. There, I shared with Grant all the things that I had experienced with Felix Baxter.

I had kept the article on my laptop of Reginald Catterson and his check from GNS, Inc. I was able to retrieve from the internet, how Teddy McBride had the winning ticket for the lottery. The article explained how he had found it on the bathroom floor, before boarding a flight in Chicago. I even had kept the article about Mary and how she had received funds to help her ailing sister. I told him about Chester Brown and how his widow

received an endowment in honor of her husband who had assisted Felix in the past. I smiled as I told him about Roger and his transformation.

I told him about how my life had changed once Felix had entered it. At first I had thought it was Felix, but it was not. I had changed because of the things he taught me. I shared with him how a truck driver appeared out of the blue to help me on a desolated highway with a flat tire. I said how I *happened* to sit next to a man on my commute home, who ended up fixing my car. I even told Grant how Felix tried to warn me about not telling him about my near miss with Pat Donnelly, and how Felix was in my life.

It was nice to finally share all this with him.

“And, you say he resembles Morgan Freeman?” he asked smiling.

“Not just looks like him, a dead ringer for him. He even has the same melodious voice.” I continued.

“So, what is GNS? He asked.

“That, my love, is the question of the hour.” I said as I sat in his arms on my bed.

Chapter 7

The following day we had to work.

We were in the parking lot waiting for the van. We had just left my car. We were catching a flight to commute to Dulles. We had four short days in Florida.

Our van driver was a young man with an energetic personality. I had seen him before and today he was just as animated.

His name is Daniel and he was telling us about his family. He and his wife had two children. However, he had a sister who was a single parent. She had lost a battle

with cancer only a month ago. Daniel and his wife had taken in her four children.

“We live in a small house in Oviedo.” He said. “The kids have had to double up and then some for all of us to fit.” He informed us as he smiled.

I remembered him telling me about his sister being ill. He never even gave it a second thought about taking on her children.

“We have a lot of fun.” He said. “My wife and I work different shifts so one of us is usually home.”

I knew from our previous conversation that his sister was not in a prosperous situation. She worked two jobs just too merely get by. When she passed, all she left were her children.

None of this seemed to bother Daniel. In fact, he thought he was a lucky man to have this large family.

Daniel had one of those personalities that would change your day. I had seen him in the early morning as well as late at night. He was always the same.

Once we had our bags out of the van and we were entering the airport, Grant turned to me.

“Well, aren’t you going to send a message to that Felix guy?”

I was kind of shocked. “Really, why would you say that?”

“Olivia were you not on the same van?”

I nodded.

“You mean you are not affected by his story?”

“I am.” I agreed. “It is just that he hardly seems in a destitute situation.”

“I guess you would not understand the pressure a man is under.”

“I guess not, since I am not one.”

“Olivia, that man is happy but I am sure that he wonders how he is going to feed his family. Not to mention educating them.”

“But, he is so content. Not a care in the world.” I argued.

“That is how he appears. I can tell you it is different. And, I don’t know why this is an issue. Your Felix friend seems like an equal opportunity benefactor.”

Chapter 8

We were walking toward the Known Crew Member line. As we approached the TSA agent checking badges, I noticed it was Felix.

I was kind of dumb struck to see him here. He looked at my badge and said, “You might want to listen to him.”

I knew he meant Grant. With my mouth wide open I walked on allowing him to check Grants badge. As we walked toward the monorail I turned to Grant and pointed to Felix.

“Grant that was Felix.”

He looked confused.

“That’s him, the guy who checked our badges. Now you have seen Felix.” I insisted. “He told me that I should listen to you.”

Grant looked back at the agent. He looked at me as though he was looking at a pig wearing lipstick. “Olivia, that is a middle aged white woman checking badges.”

When I looked again, he was right. I shook my head. “But he was there, Grant. I saw him. He told me I should listen to you about Daniel.”

“Olivia, it seems you are the only one who sees him. But I do agree with him. You *should* listen to me.”

Chapter 9

I smiled, remembering, as we sat across the desk from Max Diamond. I was deep in thought. I was startled when he finally spoke.

“Your son, Jacob is living in Moline, Illinois. He attends a small high school there, called Moline High. He is a star football player which was the big break for me, finding him.”

“How did you find him?” Grant asked.

Max held the photo copy of a picture I had sent to him of Grant and his son when Jacob was only seven.

I thanked God that I had told Grant that I had passed that along to Max along with Grants full name and address.

Max turned around the flat screen computer monitor. He closed in on the face of Jacob and enlarged it.

"I have a program for age progression." He said as he made the picture of Jacob become that of a sixteen year old high school junior.

I could see Grant's face change along with the enhancement. I could read from his expression, the sadness that went along with all the years he had missed.

Max stopped and left the picture of the now young man, staring at us.

He referred to another piece of paper on his desk. It was a background and history of Grant.

“My work as a detective was due to a lot of hunches. I have a strong instinct and follow that, like a bloodhound.”

He smiled, and I was growing too really like this character.

“I saw that you played football in high school and college, Grant.”

Grant nodded. He was aware of the background check, so there were no surprises here.

“Well, believe it or not, the apple does not fall far from the tree. When I was on the force, I would see kids doing the same thing as their parents even though they might have been separated at birth. I am not just talking about crime, which has more to do with environment. I am talking about cases of missing children or adopted kids. The gene pool is still the gene pool.”

"I used another program to get all the names of boys presently in high school sports. I started with football and got lucky. I got even luckier because I began with Illinois, and found him. The hard part was the name. He is going by Jacob D. Radcliff. That is where I got tripped up, but not for long. I found your ex-wife's maiden name. Sometimes women do that. I played with the name until I found him."

Max punched a few keys on his keyboard and up popped a picture of a young man in a football uniform holding a ball under his arm. It was the same age enhanced face in real surroundings. His face was a younger version of Grants, no mistaking him.

I could feel my eyes fill with tears. I looked over to Grant and saw a tear running down his cheek. He made no attempt at hiding it.

“I still had to be sure,” Max continued.

“I have connections all over, part of the perks of being a cop. I called one of my buddies in Moline. I had him attend a game. I could count on him to ask all the right questions. It is also a small town, with the small town contentment. People are not as guarded and they easily shared. Besides that, my friend has been a cop there for a couple of decades. He got all the information I needed to confirm that this is indeed your son, Grant.”

Chapter 10

We were boarding for a four day trip. As fate would have it, we had a long overnight in Moline. We would arrive in Moline at 4pm on Friday. We would not leave until the afternoon on Saturday.

Max had told us not to attempt to make any contact with Jacob until he 'kicked some Shelby ass in court,' as he put it.

He told us where we could find him, on the promise that we would let the courts work for us. Both Grant and I trusted him.

We were just about boarded when I saw that the gate agent had put the infant in

the wrong row on the plane. I was not surprised. Once I started to move them, the passengers on the plane decided that it was time to play musical chairs. It takes some tact, yet you can't let it start or you will never have an on time departure.

One man wanted to sit next to his wife. The man in the seat agreed and moved to the seat just behind the bulkhead. There is a little more room, and most like that seat.

As soon as he moved the woman in 3 C complained.

"I paid \$69.00 more for this seat. And now he is sitting here, without paying extra!"

I could not believe that she was as rude as to say that with the passenger seated next to her.

Sometimes the airline charges more for the bulkhead seats. However, this man had nothing to do with this.

Because strangling people is illegal, even rude ones, I use sarcasm to curb my desire.

“Oh you paid \$69.00 for this seat?” I asked her pointing to the seat occupied by the man.

“No, I paid that for my seat.” She insisted.

“Then, there is not a problem, ma’am. He is obviously not in your lap.” I said as I walked past her taking the final count.

Chapter 11

I could not blame Grant for wanting to see Jacob. I was anxious to see him as well. Friday nights are when most high schools play football. We would be there for his game. Max had told us that Jacob was a kicker for the team.

We rented a car once we changed. It did not take long to get to the high school.

We entered the crowded stadium and took a seat in the bleachers. I watched Grant closely as the team was announced and ran on the field. The kicker routinely is off to the side, so even with the helmet we found him immediately. Grant watched his

every move. He saw him wave to someone in the crowd. A woman waved back.

“That is Shelby!” Grant explained, almost as though he was seeing a ghost and villain at the same time. He was.

I was at a loss for words. I wanted to reassure him that it was going to be okay. “We are closer now, Grant than you have been in a long time.”

“She seems to be alone.” Grant said.

Max had informed us that she and her husband had split shortly after she married him and took Jacob away.

We stayed for the duration of the game. We kept to ourselves. It would not be wise to let anyone know why we were at the game.

Grant saw his son kick the winning point for the team just before the game was

over. I could see the pride as well as the desire to go to him. I had to commend his ability to hold back.

Chapter 12

We left immediately after the game. The band came out after the game for a special presentation. It was a good time to exit, before the crowd.

When we were in the parking lot it was very dark. I was surprised it was not well lit.

A couple of cars from us, I saw a woman struggling with her kids. She had two small children who were obviously tired.

Grant was too absorbed in the night to notice. I turned to him. "I think she needs help. I will be right back."

I approached the car to see that one of her children was a special needs child. He was the younger of the two kids. He appeared to be around six. The older child was trying to help but his brother was a handful.

“Let me help you.” I said. I helped her get the kids into the car.

She was relieved. “Thanks so much. My son as you can see has some challenging issues.”

She must have seen that I was interested. She continued. “He has an inoperable brain tumor. He has constant seizers. There is a special school he can attend but it is quite expensive. The state will help with some, but the rest is too much. Believe it or not, the school is close to where we live. It would be such a blessing.”

“Are you a single mom?” I asked. It was more of a statement than a question. It was written all over her face and body language.

“Yes, his dad is not into this kind of ‘drama’ as he puts it. He wanted him put away; I cannot do that, at least not yet.”

She put her key in the ignition. “I’m sorry; I don’t usually unload this way. My name is Carrie. Carrie Wilkins, these are my two boys, Chris and Trevor. My son Kevin is a running back on the football team.” She said as she extended her hand to me.

“I am Olivia Hamilton. This is my boyfriend, Grant.” I said as I shook her hand.

“Well, thanks again for your help.” She said. I smiled as she drove away.

Once we were in the car I turned to Grant.

“I’m sorry, you probably need to talk.”

Grant seemed quiet. “I’m okay.” He tried to cover how he was feeling. “That was my kid out there. Someone I never thought I would see again!”

“It’s just the beginning too, Grant. I have a good feeling about Max. I like him. Think he knows his stuff.”

Grant held my hand and kissed it. I could tell he was done talking.

“Well you ready for another miracle?” I asked as we pulled into the parking lot of the hotel.

Grant looked confused.

I took out my phone and opened the app for mail. I selected a new email and put in the contact...FelixBaxter@gns.com.

Chapter 13

I sat in the crew room with Dianna. Since training she had been my confident and many times my liberator. I am not sure about what I have done for her, but she helped me get through the first year of this job. It was called reserve, or hell. We graduated together and were based in Chicago, and now in Dulles.

I was going on a trip without Grant. I had become quite the sap when it came to our romance. I had snagged one of his t-shirts from his laundry. I would take it with me on a trip when we were not together. I could at least smell him before I fell asleep at night.

Every time we parted, I found a card in my luggage when I unpacked. We made the most of our time together and were grateful that we 'owned' the sky.

We had definitely developed a connection. I could *feel* him thinking about me just before the phone would ring. It did not just happen once where I would get text message from him, asking me if I was okay just after something had upset me. He knew. He knew without any indication from me, other than the sixth sense we had naturally cultivated by simply loving each other.

Chapter 14

We sat in the crew room drinking coffee. Grant and I had just returned from Hawaii and I was tired. A good tired though.

Once again, Grant surprised me. He chartered a helicopter and took me through the mountains on Maui.

"You know how to fly these too!" I exclaimed. Grant was pretty modest. "What don't you do?" I asked.

"I cannot fly a blimp." He laughed. "Besides, this is the only way I could show you the inner beauty of this island."

And, it was. This was truly paradise. We had driven along the coast of the island, but here in the mountains were waterfalls and a world that seemed its own.

“So, when are you going to teach me how to fly this?” I joked.

“Let’s get the plane down first.” he said.

Chapter 15

Dianna and I were laughing about 'interesting' passengers and trading stories. She was also one of the few who knew that Grant and I were dating. I was getting more comfortable with our relationship becoming common knowledge. In fact, crew members were more likely to switch trips with us, because they knew we liked to fly together.

I was both laughing and shaking my head as she told me about a flight she took while commuting.

It was late at night. Most of the passengers were asleep. There was a flight

attendant seated in the back near to the rest rooms.

I will never understand why planes are configured with the rest rooms near to any exit. But they are.

“This woman gets up and starts hitting the release button on the exit door.” Dianna told me. “I had to look twice because I could not believe what I was seeing.”

Due to the pressure at 30,000 feet she could not really open it but I am sure it was unnerving to the flight attendant.

“What did the FA do?” I asked.

“She must have been in as much disbelief as I was because she asked what she was doing in a paniced voice.”

“The woman turned to her as though she knew what she was doing and said, ‘I want to go to the bathroom.’”

“I loved it,” Dianna said. “She said, ‘if you open that door you will surely go to the bathroom!’”

“Was she drunk?” I asked thinking it was the only explanation.

“She did not appear to be that way.” Dianna exclaimed as she laughed.

“How are things with Grant?” she asked.

I nodded. “Really good, I keep pinching myself.”

“You give me hope.” She said. “Sometimes I think all I am dealing with is what another woman had the brains to get rid of.”

I laughed. “But, there are the ones who were not smart enough to realize what

they had.” I encouraged her. “Look at Grant.”

Chapter 16

I arrived in Moline at around noon. Grant would not be here for another three hours. Fortunately, I was listed on the reservation for the car. I completed the paperwork and took the car to the hotel. I changed out of my uniform and laid on the bed for what I thought would be only a few minutes.

I have gotten in the habit of setting an alarm even when I think I only need to rest for a few minutes. A trip can take a lot out of you. Once you lie down it may be the next morning before you awaken.

Sure enough, I had gone into a semi-coma and awakened to the alarm on my phone. I

still had enough time to shower and pick up Grant.

Grant looked exhausted when he got in the car.

“You know, you have plenty of time to rest before the game.”

“I am not sure I will be able to sleep. But, I do feel more relaxed than the last time we were here. And, she should have received the papers by now.”

Max had Shelby served, and there was a court date for next week in Chicago.

I could understand his apprehension. But, it did not keep him from attending a football game. There were only a few left in the season.

We had decided since Shelby might be on alert we would keep a low profile at the game. We arrived after it began and we

would leave in the middle of the fourth quarter.

We were not doing it because Grant had any fears of Shelby, but to protect his son. He was not sure what he had been told. He was sure it was not good.

As we sat in the stands, someone was handing out a flyer. Once we were seated I looked at what the woman at the bottom of the bleachers handed me.

I tapped Grant on the arm. “Look at this!”

He looked and read with me about a fundraiser for Trevor Wilkins. It stated that GNS Inc. would match all donations, 5 times!

Grant smiled.

“Yes, Felix,” I said. “You get to see him at work.”

I could feel his presence and looked around. Sure enough, just a couple of rows behind me, I saw him. He was decked out in the school colors with a knit cap.

“Look Grant there he is!”

Grant looked around. “I know what he should look like, but there is not anyone who looks like Morgan Freeman. I see a Joe Pesci look alike. Oh, and over there I think I see Joan Rivers, before all the facelifts.” He teased.

I hit his arm. “He is there. I see him.”

I looked again and Felix gave me his familiar wave.

Grant looked at me seriously. “Olivia, you are the only one who sees him.”

Chapter 17

Our day in court was almost uneventful. Max gave his statements and it was basically an open and shut kind of thing. Grant had a right to see his son, and now the courts were holding Shelby accountable.

Grant noted how she did not look well. He said she had aged considerably. Her normally small frame looked frail.

“Mr. Devreaux, you will have visitation rights, beginning this Wednesday evening. Your rights shall include every other

weekend and holidays will be determined by the courts to be fair."

Shelby appeared agitated as the judge told Grant of his rights. Her expression did a 180 when child support was once again reinstated. She did not succeed in retaining the back child support.

Max had done a thorough job of convincing the judge that Grant's lack of contribution to Jacob was clearly not intentional. He had retrieved all the past documentation from his previous lawyer showing how Grant had tried to find Shelby and stay a part of Jacob's life.

He told us to keep it quiet that Grant had always put money on the side for Jacob. Once he was part of Jacob's life again he would need it, at lease to educate him.

Chapter 18

The following Wednesday we arrived in Moline at around 2pm.

I was only going as moral support. I had no intention of accompanying Grant the first time he visited his son. If he felt the timing was right, he could bring him back to the hotel.

I waited, watching the television, not really concentrating on what was broadcasting.

It was only a short time when Grant returned. I knew it was not good. He came through the door and sat in the chair.

“He did not want to see me.” He said. I could see his eyes watering. “All this, and he won’t even meet me. I would have thought he would at least be curious.” He shook his head. “I guess he does not remember anything from when he was young.”

I moved closer praying for the right thing to say. “Grant this may take some time. Right now, you cannot give up. It will be hard, but you have to keep coming back. I know eventually he will come around. You have no idea what he has been told.”

I poured a glass of water and handed it to him. I sat across from him on the bed.

“I still believe that in the end the truth will always surface. I almost feel sorry for her when it does.”

Chapter 19

“What if...we got married?”

I was not really sure I had heard him correctly. We were in Scranton, Pennsylvania. We had a long overnight. We had visited the train station during the day. Grant did seem reflective most of the day, but I assumed it was because of Jacob. We had eaten at Kildare's. I thought he might have had too much to drink.

“What?”

“I said what if we got married?” Grant repeated.

Now, I was a little upset. "You mean, like why don't we order a pizza?"

"No, we just ate, unless you are hungry." He teased. He knew he was treading thin ice.

"Gee, that is really romantic, Grant."

He could see I was hurt and disappointed. He walked up to me and put his arms around me.

"I know that was very lame." He apologized.

"Slightly."

"I guess I was testing the waters. I know that is kind of sudden and we have not known each other all that long."

"Maybe too long." I said, sarcastically. "Does this have anything to do with Jacob?"

“Yes and no. I would not insult you that way Olivia.”

“But you think it might help.”

“I know I am grasping at straws. I would like to let him know that there would be some stability in his life.”

He looked into my eyes. “I love you. I guess that was really careless of me. You are the woman I want to spend the rest of my life loving.”

I pulled back. I was giving him the benefit of the doubt. I knew the events with Jacob had put him on an emotional roller coaster.

“I understand, but you are going to have to do a hell of a lot better on your approach Captain.”

Chapter 20

I was not sure in the next few days if Grant had really meant what he had said.

I was proud of myself. I did not bring it up. In fact, I was successful in putting it out of my mind. I was very secure in how we felt about each other. Marriage was not a make it or break it, thing when it came to our relationship. But, it still says something when a man wants to make you his wife, as archaic as that may sound.

We were at his house in South Carolina. The late autumn breeze was streaming through the house when I awakened

around 7am. I was surprised that Grant was already up.

I could smell the coffee in the nearby kitchen. I donned a sheer robe and entered the kitchen.

While I was pouring the coffee, I noticed a wooden plane on the counter. It was a replica of a piper, much like the plane Grant used to teach me to fly.

It was intractably carved giving a lot of detail. Inside the doors of the plane I could see a note. I pulled it out and read it.

My Dear Olivia,

What if...I told you that every waking moment is spent thinking of you?

What if...knowing that you would be part of my life forever, would make me the luckiest man on earth?

What if...you look outside right now and see a man who will do everything in his power to make your dreams come true?

I looked out the window and saw Grant with his back to me on a bench looking out over the ocean. As if on cue he stood up, turned around, and looked toward the house. He could see me in the kitchen window. He stretched his arms out.

I picked up the plane and ran to his embrace. He took the plane from me and actually got on one knee.

He opened a compartment in the front of the plane. I had not noticed it. Inside was a beautiful ring.

“Olivia, will you become my wife?”

I was overcome and almost could not answer.

“Yes,” was all that I could manage to utter.

He stood and took me in his arms.

Chapter 21

We left for the Virgin Islands after our next trip. We were married on a small boat in Meagan's Bay, just off the shores of St. Thomas.

It was nearly sunset when the minister performed the ceremony. Boats that passed by honked and people cheered because they knew we had just been wed.

We would only have four days since we did not take a long time to plan, or change our schedules.

It was like being in paradise. Our room over looked the pool and then the ocean just beyond.

I felt like I was a kid again. I had worn a long gown of pale yellow.

After dinner, we walked along the beach. It was completely deserted. The tide was coming in further and it was touching the bottom of my gown. I loved the dress and did not want to see it ruined.

I let go of Grant's hand and ran ahead of him, toward the water. I pulled my dress up over my head and threw it as far from the water as I could. I could hear him laughing as he came up behind me taking me into the water, as the tide washed over us in rhythmic motion.

It was the most romantic night of my life.

But, making love in the sand was still not the way it is portrayed in the movies. I ended up washing sand out of places I did not know existed on my body.

Chapter 22

The following morning, Grant ordered room service. He was shaving when the breakfast arrived.

I ran to the door and let the server in the room. He was looking down as he entered the room. He was a tall, older black man.

“You made a very wise choice, Mrs. Devreaux.” I kind of chuckled because it was a simple breakfast. “It’s just ham and eggs.” I said.

When he looked up I saw it was Felix!

“Where would you like this table Mrs. Devreaux?”

“Felix! I should be surprised, but I am not.”

He smiled and moved the cart into the room. He turned quickly and moved toward the door.

“You are on your honeymoon. I will leave you alone. I just wanted to say congratulations to both of you.” He said with a sincere smile. Then he was gone.

When Grant emerged from the bathroom he could tell I was very distracted.

“Are you okay? You look like you have seen a ghost.”

I pointed to the door. “It was Felix. He delivered the food.”

Grant stood for a moment. I still don’t know how he really processes this whole

ordeal with Felix. He has seen the results, but sometimes I think he feels I am seeing things with his 'appearances.'

"Okay," he said. He looked at the table.
"Let's eat I am starving."

Some things are just better left alone.

Chapter 23

One of the reasons I love my friend Dianna is that she has such a quick wit. She can get me thinking straight again without slapping me. She helps me to see the bright side of things when I let life get the best of me.

She has overcome obstacles that would stifle most. She has been an inspiration.

One day, after commuting from a hellish four day trip she was running on empty. She left the parking lot of the airport anxious to get home.

She had put the trip behind her as she looked forward to sleeping in her own bed. The last thing she needed was the flashing red lights she saw behind her.

“Wonderful!” she exclaimed.

She had no idea why a cop would be pulling her over. She had been doing the speed limit.

She did a quick check of her seat belt as the officer approached the car.

“License and registration please.” He said politely. She took that as a good sign. He was also not bad looking.

“Is something wrong?” Dianna asked.

“No, just have a tail light out. I’m not sure you are aware of that.” said as he looked over her documents with his flashlight.

“No, I was not.” She confessed.

“You far from home?” he asked.

“Just a couple of blocks.” She said.

“Okay, I pulled you over to let you know. You could get a citation for that. I don’t want to see that happen.”

She could not believe it. He was just warning her! She remembered that something similar had happened to me.

“Thank you!” she said not believing her luck.

“Just trying to help out.” He said with a smile.

Dianna did not know what came over her but she did it anyway. “Are you single?” she asked sweetly.

Chapter 24

After our ephemeral honeymoon, it was time to return to work.

We had different trips and it was going to be hard to be away from each other. Our running away and getting married seemed to take some of the disappointment with Jacob away, at least for a little while.

I was going to Ottawa for a long overnight. Grant would be arriving the following day. We would have one night together while we were on parallel trips.

He was flying with none other than, 'tell all' Shannon Roberts.

I happened to be in the lobby as they arrived. Shannon was not bright enough to know that Grant and I were still together, even after she had made it her business to tell him about my interlude with Pat Donnelly.

When they entered the lobby, she saw me. As Grant was filling out the log sheet for the crew she looked at me, and then at him.

She not only had little tact she was not too aware that we had married.

I did not let on, and let Grant finish his work. She leaned toward him. "Remember what I had told you about her?" she asked him.

"You mean my wife?" he snapped.

Shannon quickly retreated and tried to melt into the wood work. The look on her

face was enough to make me laugh. I walked up to Grant and kissed him.

Chapter 25

Later that night Grant told me just how exasperating the trip had been. He did not know anyone quite as lazy.

“When we landed, I kept hearing remarks from the passengers, like, *‘I would really have liked to have a beer.’* Others said, *‘I am so thirsty.’*

“So, I turned to her and asked her why they were saying that. She shrugged her shoulders. Then, I asked her if she had done a service. Mind you, this was a two hour flight.”

“And?” I asked.

“She said ‘no.’ Do you believe that, Olivia?”

“That’s insane!” I was surprised. “What did she do all that time?”

“I saw a tablet in her bag. I’ll just bet she stowed away in the galley and watched a movie.”

“Unbelievable!” I agreed. “I would have had passengers asking for things, if I even entertained the idea.”

“I am sure she did. However, what are they going to do if she refuses?”

“What did you say to her about it?”

“You know, I don’t believe in ratting on your fellow employees, even though I am technically her boss. I did tell her if she did it again, I would write her up. Tomorrow, I will definitely take the ‘walk of shame’ to the bathroom and interact with the

passengers to be sure they are taken care of.”

He smiled a devilish smile.

“What are you thinking about?” I asked.

“Talk about going to the lav. I have to tell you something really funny. She had the hots for Devon the FO. She asked me if I would take a long bathroom break so she could come up to the cockpit and ‘service’ Devon.”

I looked at him in disbelief. “You are kidding.”

He shook his head. “Serious as a heart attack.”

“You didn’t, did you?”

He shook his head again. “No, Devon was not interested. Even after I told him that she said she was not wearing underwear!”

Sometimes, there are some things that I would rather not know. "I could have lived my whole life without knowing that, Grant."

He moved close to me and put his arms around me. "You know I would never be part of it. But, I did think it was funny. I told her to save it for the overnight. She needs to pay more attention to the passengers, rather than the goings on of the crews."

"Ya think?" I said.

Chapter 26

We were relaxing on the porch of Grants home overlooking the ocean.

We were discussing our unique living arrangements. It was time to decide where we would finally reside, in one house rather than two.

“Just look, Olivia, this place is beautiful.” Grant said.

“I love it here,” I told him. “But, I do have a granddaughter in Florida. It is easier to visit her if we live there.”

I looked out over the ocean and agreed that it would be difficult to leave this place.

Grant nodded his head. "I cannot argue that, as much as I would like to."

"Maybe, in time we can come back here. I don't know. I still own my home, right now it would be easier, and don't you agree?"

The phone had not rung all day. It was a nice change. It was close to sunset. Grant had made margaritas, and we were munching on cheese and crackers.

We were interrupted by the tone from Grant's cell phone. It was in the bedroom. When he answered, I could only slightly hear his voice, from the other room, as he spoke to whomever it was that was calling. At one point I could hear him raise his voice as though he was hearing something urgent. Then, he was quiet.

I really don't like someone staring at me when I am on the phone. I was curious, but would wait till he was done.

I did not hear him talking but he did not come back to the porch.

I left the sunset to see him sitting on the bed. He was pale and shaking his head. Before I could ask, he spoke.

"That was Max Diamond. Shelby has passed away."

"What!" I was not sure I heard him correctly. "How? When?"

"She was in an auto accident." He replied, still trying to process what he had just learned.

I sat next to him on the bed.

"Max said he received a phone call from her attorney. It happened yesterday."

Chapter 27

Once I was over the shock, things began to quickly come together. Now, Grant had unconditional parental rights to Jacob.

“Do you have any details, Grant?” I was almost afraid to ask if Jacob was in the car with her.

“All I know is that she had just dropped Jacob off at school. Thank God he was not with her. The car is totaled.”

“What do we do next?” I asked him. I was sure that Max had given him some counsel.

“Jacob is with his grandparents in Lincoln Park.”

Grant shook his head. “He must be devastated. No matter what Shelby was like to me, she was still his mother.”

It did not surprise me that his first thoughts were concern for Jacob. In spite of the fact that he had rejected Grant and all his efforts, Grant loved him.

“I am free to go get him. Jacob has been clued in that this is what will happen. Max said that the family has informed him that the funeral will be later this week. He suggested I give him till at least then.”

“Of course.” I agreed.

Chapter 28

The following week Grant went to pick up Jacob.

I had kept in touch with my friend Jerry. He had helped me through my first year as a flight attendant. I had rented a room from him.

His business would be taking him out of the country for a long period of time. He opened up his condo to us to use. This way we were not far from ~~of~~ Jacob's grandparents. He was close to them. We wanted him to be as comfortable as possible.

With two residences in two locations, we knew we would be making some changes. For now, our concern was Jacob.

“I am surprised that they did not insist on keeping Jacob.” I told Grant in reference to Jacob’s grandparents.

“They really could not. In fact I think that they encouraged him. You know they are getting on in years and not in the best of health.”

“What if Jacob wants to be with them? Have you thought about that?”

“Of course, I am sure he brought it up to them. But I will tell you something, something that has always had me confused.” He said. “David Radcliff was always a decent man, his wife a different story. And, he always liked me. That being said, I never understood his role in all of

this. I pegged him as a fair and decent man."

He smiled as he put his shirts in an empty drawer. "I knew I was in trouble on my wedding day. Roger handed me \$2000.00. He said he was sorry he had spoiled his daughter. He hoped this would help over the honeymoon."

"Really?" I found that astounding.

"Yes, I should have known then," he hesitated, "And maybe I did."

Chapter 29

Jacob entered the house and was very quiet. He had earplugs in and barely acknowledged me.

Grant had told him that we would stay in the Chicago land area for as long as he wanted. He also told him that we had a place in Florida and South Carolina.

In retrospect, we were actually giving him too many choices. In our effort to comfort him and welcome him, we over extended Grants parental authority.

The following days could have been worse, but I am not sure how.

The following morning, I had found the two champagne glasses from our wedding, broken. I had a sick feeling that I knew what had happened. Although I love Grant with all my heart, I could feel the words, '*little bastard*' leaving my lips.

I turned to see that Grant had entered the room. I prayed he did not hear me. I looked over to the couch where Jacob was sitting.

"Jacob, I am sure this was an accident, but I wish you had told me or cleaned it up."

He shrugged his shoulders saying, "Oh sorry." He was not.

I could see Grant's face turning red. He was more upset with his flippant attitude

than what had happened. And, it seemed as though it was done on purpose.

“Sojourn,” I said to Grant before he could explode. I knew that was our signal but I had found another place it was suitable. I had a feeling it was about to become a household expression.

Later, I found the wooden plane where Grant had hidden my engagement ring. It looked as though it had been burned. When I smelled it, there was no mistaking it was.

Now, Grant was furious. He knew what that meant to me. He also took it as a personal attack. He stood with the plane in his hand.

“Can you explain this? What would make you do this?”

Jacob looked at his father with belligerence. “I just wanted to see what it looked like on fire, Grant.”

It was not the first time Jacob had called him by his name, rather than addressing him as his father. However, the blatant lack of respect is what took Grant over the edge.

“I think you better leave the room, leave before I say, or do something.” He said to Jacob.

“You mean like you did when I was a kid?” Jacob retorted back to him.

This hurt Grant to the core. “You don’t know what you are talking about Jacob. I have tried. There are things you don’t know.”

“All I know is that you were gone and Mom had to do everything for me. If it was

not for Grandma and Grandpa we would have had nothing. Now, you guys have two houses and my mother is dead!"

He left the room slamming the door to the room we had prepared for him.

Chapter 30

Grant was upset for the rest of the night. We talked endlessly about what would be best.

Jacob never came out of his room. I called him to dinner, but he did not respond. As the evening wore on, I was more concerned.

We had turned on a movie. It was hard to concentrate.

Grant went back to Jacob's room. He knocked but did not get a response.

"I think you need to go in there, Grant." I encouraged him.

Grant entered the room to find the window open and Jacob gone. We knew immediately that he must have gone to his grandparents, or a friend.

Grant called the Radcliff's. He was not there. David immediately began calling the friends Jacob had near to where his grandparents lived. We began to panic when he had not gone to a friend's house either.

One friend, Travis thought of something. There was a place where they would go to do things boys do when they don't want to get caught.

When Jacob and Travis were younger, Jacob would spend the summers with his grandparents. He and Travis had become the best of friends.

They would go to the park every day. There was a building where kids would go

to smoke and drink when they could get liquor or cigarettes. He assured us that it was all experimental because neither really ever developed that habit.

"We liked to go there because no one knew we were there."

We raced to the building to find Jacob there. It was obvious he had been crying, even though he tried to cover it up.

I could see the anger that Grant had earlier turn to compassion. Jacob only knew what he had been told.

He looked at his son. "Come on, Jacob. You can go back to your grandparents' house. You can stay with them."

Jacob said nothing. He got in the car and we took him back to the Radcliff's'.

After David had let Jacob in, Grant looked at him. "Congratulations, you win."

Chapter 31

It was still fairly cold in Chicago.

“Let’s get out of here, Grant. Why don’t we rent a boat near to your house and get away from all this.” I suggested.

We had taken some time from work in order to make the transition for Jacob. We could take a couple of days and think things through.

Grant looked at his phone. “The weather will be perfect in South Carolina.” He said through his obvious disappointment.

We left early on a Saturday. Grant is not one to pout. For that I am grateful. We knew this would not be an easy transition for Jacob. However, Grant was determined that in the end, his love for Jacob would prevail. Now, he was not too sure. Maybe it was too late after all.

We spent the day in the waters of the Atlantic. Grant was right about it being perfect weather we sailed out several miles, till the shore was in the distant horizon.

That night, after we made love, I remember being lulled to sleep by the rocking of the boat. It was a peaceful calm night. For the first time in weeks there seemed to be some tranquility.

Chapter 32

Sunday night, we were close to shore.

We were well aware of other boaters. We knew the etiquette of boating. We also did not drink too much while at sea. We were aware that unfortunately, not everyone did the same. So, we were cautious.

Unlike the roads or the skies the drinking and boating of other people is not nearly as regulated. It is easy to get carried away while out boating.

It was dark and we were relying on the fact that other boaters would have their lights on.

Other than the fact that Jacob had not joined us, we had an unspoiled time together.

I was in Grants arms as we navigated toward the shore.

I remembered that I had lit the stove to make some tea. We could warm up a bit before docking.

“I can hear the water boiling; I will be right back with some tea.” I said as I left his arms and entered the lower cabin.

All I remembered later was how the pot jumped from the burner. I can recall the scalding hot water on my arm as the vessel seemed to spilt apart. I saw water coming in from all directions.

I knew that the boat must be sinking. I instinctively swam toward the first opening I saw. I felt as though I had been

under the water for a long time. In reality it was only seconds. I had to work against the pressure of the sinking boat. It tried to take me as it descended.

I don't know how I was able to overcome the force of the Atlantic as it swallowed our boat.

I took in a deep painful breath as I surfaced. My first thought was of Grant. He had been above me and I was sure he had been struck.

I immediately began screaming his name as I tried to see something in the dark waters. There was debris everywhere. I was hit in the face by a hard metal piece of the boat. It hit me resiliently and for a moment I was dizzy. I feared the worse for Grant, as I frantically paddled through the water hoping to find him.

Then, I felt something hit my ankle. I could see something in front of me. As it drifted closer I could feel something at my side. I reached over and grabbed Grants jacket. I could feel his motionless body next to me. I pulled him into my arms. I could feel his face next to mine. It was cold and wet. I could feel a warm liquid. I knew he was bleeding. I pulled him close and felt his forehead which was draining profusely.

“Grant!” I cried out. I knew he was not conscious, but I kept talking to him, trying to bring him around.

Then, I began to call out for help. I knew there had to be others. I was sure by the impact that the other boat had substantial damage.

It seemed hours before I could hear the megaphone of the coast guard as they

approached us. They scanned the water with a search light till they located us.

It was not until they sighted us, when I saw the extent of Grants injuries.

I began to cry as I saw the blood that covered his face. I could feel a large gash along the side of his forehead and cheek.

“Oh my God, help my husband. Please help him!”

Chapter 33

I must have dozed off as I sat vigil with Grant. I had not left his side in the past two days.

I was not sure if I felt him first, or if I heard his voice as he said, “Olivia?”

When I looked up, there stood Jacob. I was pretty groggy but I could see he was pale. His hands were shaking as he held his baseball cap.

“Jacob,” I said as I stood. “I’m glad you are here.”

I could see he was upset with Grants appearance. His face was swollen beneath the bandages. His right hand was also bandaged along with his right leg.

“Is he going to be okay?” Jacob asked.

I took a deep breath. “He should be.” I tried to reassure him. “He is in a lot of pain right now. I asked them to sedate him earlier, so he would sleep.”

“It will mean a lot to your father, to see you.” I said sincerely.

“I wanted to talk to my dad.” He said.

I was kind of taken aback. This was the first time he had given Grant that kind of respect.

“My grandfather had a talk with me today, after we found out about the accident.” He explained. “He told me the whole

story.” He looked over to his father. “I hope I am not too late.”

He shook his head. “I cannot believe what my mother had done.” He said as his voice began to crack.

I felt so badly for him. I had no idea what had been said. It was enough to bring him here. The struggle within him must have been devastating.

I put my hand on his. “Jacob, sometimes people do things that we cannot explain. But, there was not a day that your father did not think about you.”

Jacob nodded his head.

“I will go get some coffee in the cafeteria, so you can be alone. He wakes often. I am sure he would love to see you.”

“Thanks.” Jacob said.

I looked back into the room before I left.
“Can I get you anything?”

He shook his head.

“I’m glad you are here, Jacob.” I said again,
as I walked into the hallway.

Chapter 34

It must have been my day of reckoning. I was in the cafeteria, lost in my thoughts. I was also exhausted.

I looked up from my coffee to see Sylvia Donnelly standing in front of me. I was shocked.

“I’m sorry, Olivia. I said something to you but I don’t think you heard me.”

“Sylvia...hello.” I was more than surprised.

“May I sit down?” she asked.

“Of course,” I replied. “I’m sorry.”

She smiled. "No apology needed. You are going through a rough time."

She sat across from me. "I know that when I was in a coma, you came to see me. I know that you were a support to my husband."

I could not believe her generosity toward me. I felt an overwhelming need to confess. "Sylvia, I almost...with your husband."

I could not say it, but she filled in the blanks. "I know, Olivia. Pat told me the whole story. The problem with someone in recovery from any addiction is they tell you all, even the things you don't want to know."

She smiled as she continued. "All I know is that you helped in a crucial time. And, I do remember when you came to see me. We do hear all that happens around us, when

we are in a coma. When I heard about Grant, Pat encouraged me. I hope you don't mind the intrusion."

I could feel tears stinging my eyes. "No, not at all, thank you for coming."

.....

Sylvia stayed with me for another hour or two. When I returned to Grants room, he was awake and talking to Jacob.

Jacob was sitting on the side of the bed. If Grant was in any pain, it was not noticeable.

I watched them interact for a few minutes before entering the room. They were talking as though nothing had ever come between them.

Chapter 35

David Radcliff sat in his recliner staring blankly at the television screen.

He could hear his wife in the kitchen. She was not speaking to him, but that was not unusual. This time it may be some time before she would come around. What he had just done with Jacob might just take her over the edge. He was not sure. For now, he was enjoying the peace and quiet.

He thought about earlier that night when he entered Jacobs's room. He had heard about the boating accident. Olivia had called him. She thought that even though

Jacob did not show any interest in being Grant's son, he deserved to know.

Roger stood for a moment at the door of his grandson's room. He knocked. "Can I come in, Jacob? We need to talk."

For the next hour David told Jacob the true story. He did not feel a disloyalty to his daughter when he spoke. In fact, for the first time he finally felt that he was being a true father to her, and fair to Jacob. He would hopefully give Jacob the father he deserved, with Grant. There would also be justice for Grant. He was a man David always admired. He did not know if he could ever get over the guilt of his role in allowing his wife and daughter to hurt Grant.

He had tolerated too many injustices to slip by, in order to keep the peace. In the end, his inner conflict was devastating.

Jacob had been hurt the most. It was not too late, he hoped.

Within the hour, David was taking Jacob to the airport. He was able to find a flight to South Carolina that night. He also arranged for a cab to take Jacob to the hospital.

Chapter 36

Before the boating accident, we had planned on being in Florida before my next trip. Consequently, my manual and other duty items were at home. As much as I did not want to leave Grant, I had to, in order to fly this trip. I had traded this trip with another flight attendant some time ago. She had helped me while Grant was still in need of a lot of attention. I was paying her back by taking part of her trip.

He was doing well. Jacob was with us and was very helpful. It had been several

weeks. Grant healed nicely, as well as the healing of our family.

One day when I returned from the market I saw two champagne glasses on the counter. They were remarkably in likeness to the glasses we had the day we were married. As I held them in my hands Jacob entered the room.

“I know that they are not the same ones. I cannot replace them.” he said.

I was so touched. “They are perfect, Jacob. They are even more special.”

In the weeks that followed, we had become a close unit, as though it had always been.

I was going to arrive in Florida and still be able to pick up a flight to get back in Dulles to pick up my trip. Fortunately, my manual

was in the car. I retrieved it and went to catch my commuter flight.

Chapter 37

After I arranged my bag and locked the door, I saw the van approaching. When driver opened the door I saw that it was Daniel. He was his usual blissful self.

I asked him about his family.

He hesitated. "They are fine. I just had something very odd, but wonderful happen to me. Actually, it was a miracle!"

"What was that?"

"Well, a couple of weeks ago. I noticed a small briefcase in my van. That is unusual because I always at least get up and try

and help people when they leave or board the bus. But, at the end of my shift I found this brown leather case. And, that is not the crazy part. It was filled with money, lots of money!"

"What did you do?" I asked.

"I turned it in. We have a police department here in the airport."

"Oh," I sat back disappointed.

"Yeah, I turned it in. But, they told me that if no one claimed it, it was mine."

"So, there was not any ID in the briefcase? Odd that someone who was carrying around that much cash would leave it without any identification." I probed.

"That is what I thought, and so did the entire Orlando police department. However, they also said that finder

keepers, if no one showed up in 30 days. No one did.”

“So you got to keep it?” I was excited.

“Yes, I did!” Daniel beamed. “There was over \$200,000.00 in there. I cannot tell you how much my family could use that!”

Daniel adjusted his seat.

“The only thing was, under all the money was a card. It had the initials GNS. Or, initials are what we thought at first. The owner was maybe George Neil Smith. That is what my wife thought. I knew differently.”

“What do you think it is?” I asked him.

“It’s simple. That card was a message from angels.”

I smiled. “What do you mean?”

“Like I said, simple, God Never Sleeps.”

I sat back and was almost disorientated.
Daniel was right. I had missed it all along!

“Are you alright, Olivia?” he asked.

I could not speak. I just nodded my head.

Chapter 38

I called Grant as soon as the van drove off and I was on my way to security. I had to tell him! It went to voice mail. I did not want to leave a message. I wanted to hear his reaction. I would call later.

I could hardly contain myself. How had I missed something so obvious?

Now, that I knew I kept expecting Felix to somehow appear. He was nowhere to be found. I even entered the family rest room knowing I would be alone.

I called for him. Most of the time, all I had to do what wish he were there, and he

would know. He would always be there.
Where was he?

Chapter 39

"I think that he just saw the flight attendant uniform and found a reason to stop you. You on the other hand made it easy for him. He was probably happier than a camel on Wednesday when you asked if he was single." I said to Dianna when I saw her in the crew room.

Dianna had a date with robo cop tomorrow night. Once she saw me she decided to go along on the trip if there was room.

We would be back in plenty of time. We were going to rent a car and go to Mt.

Rushmore, a place she had not seen either. I was thrilled we had seen each other in the crew room.

Dianna laughed. We were walking to my flight. It was a simple turn, which returned tomorrow. It was only one flight this afternoon. We would be there by 4 pm. Then it was a very early flight back in the morning. By the evening I should be back in South Carolina.

Chapter 40

I had seen Dianna in the crew room. She was done with her trip. She had never been to Rapid City and the Alex Johnson hotel. She was more than curious about the 'haunted' hotel.

Maybe once we got there I would share with her about the first time I stayed there and my first real encounter with Felix Baxter.

Speaking of Felix, he had not surfaced.

I had not been able to reach Grant, either. He called once, but I did not hear the phone. He had left a voice message saying

that he was tired and going to rest, but wanted me to call and let him know I was in Dulles. I was dying to tell him about Felix.

When I called him back, Jacob answered the phone.

“He is sleeping, I hope you don’t mind that I answered his phone?” he asked.

“No, I am glad you did. He needs his rest. I am glad you are there with him. Just let him know I am in Dulles and leaving soon for the trip. I will be in touch when we land. Thanks again, Jacob.”

Chapter 41

We had a few minutes, so Dianna and I grabbed a cup of coffee in the crew room. It can be an interesting place.

Dianna was telling me about when she was in Ottawa.

“Grant and I were there just a short time ago.” I told her.”

“Did you get any beaver tail?” she asked.

“Are you kidding?” I said as I laughed.

“It is not what you think.” She said. “You have to get some beaver tail the next time you are there.”

As she was saying that, a First Officer was entering the room. He overheard us.

“I would love to watch you getting some beaver tail.” He said not missing a beat.

Both of us laughed, along with the FO.

I looked at Dianna. “Simple creatures, you always know what they are thinking

Chapter 42

Grant did not know if he just did not want Olivia away from him, or had a bad feeling about this trip. They took trips without nearly a second thought. Why was today different?

He was feeling better every day, but seemed to still tire easily.

Shortly after Olivia left, he fell into a deep sleep. He was not sure if he was dreaming, or if it was the television. He had left it on when he fell asleep.

He could see Morgan Freeman. He was telling him to look further north. When he

opened his eyes he saw before him the movie playing called, Bruce Almighty. It must have been in the twilight of his dreams that he heard his voice. He shrugged it off.

Jacob entered the room. "You missed Olivia again. She was boarding the plane. She said she would call again when she got to Rapid City."

Grant felt at a loss not speaking to her. He opened up his lap top and began tracking flight 5923 from IAD to RAP. They had just taken off.

Chapter 43

Captain Jack Miller turned to his son as he was leaving the house. "I will be home for your game on Friday," he promised. His son, Brian was a freshman on the High School baseball team.

He turned to his wife, Elizabeth and pulled her close. "Miss me tonight?" he asked as he squeezed her bottom.

She smiled. Her look said everything. "Fly safe." She said as she kissed him.

Jack Miller had been with Blue Sky Airlines for eight years. When he was hired, there

was a base in San Francisco. It was perfect. He and Elizabeth bought a home and made California their home. Unfortunately, after about two years, the base closed. Now, Jack would commute to Washington Dulles for his trips.

Before that he had been flying in the US Air Force for 18 years. He joined right after graduating high school.

While he was in the service he married his high school sweetheart against the wishes of both sets of parents. They were only 20, but could not stand to be away from each other, due to Jacks enlistment. They eloped while Jack was on leave. They returned to fuming parents who warned that it would never last. That was 24 years ago.

It was several years before they finally had Brian. Once he entered school, and after

much deliberation, Jack left the service. He was immediately hired by Blue Sky. He had spent the last four years in the left seat as Captain.

He left his family to catch the 'red eye' into Washington Dulles Airport. He was not starting his trip until after noon, so he would have plenty of time to take a nap in the crew room.

This would be a long duty day, close to 12 hours. When he landed in Kansas City for his overnight stay the van was late, by an hour. It was a short overnight and completely legal, 9 hours. However by the time the van arrived, he settled into his room, and had to awaken for his morning show time he only had 5 hours sleep.

When he entered the cabin and saw Olivia he asked, "Is there any coffee?"

Chapter 44

I was about to put my phone in airplane mode. Nothing like telling the passengers to shut down their phones only to have yours ringing.

I stood in the galley and opened my messages, hoping I had missed one from Grant. I had not. I did not mind, I was glad he was resting.

I was about to lose a signal when I had to send him a message. *I love you...GNS means God Never Sleeps! What if...Felix is God!*

Not sure why I sent the message or if my signal was too weak but I would be anxious to see what he had to say when we landed.

I strapped into the jump seat and looked over the 47 passengers on board. Dianna smiled at me from the exit row.

Chapter 45

Once we were at 10,000 feet I got up and moved to the galley. Dianna joined me. Most do not realize that our planes are a one flight attendant show. They were probably assuming she was going to help. She did offer.

We stood for a few minutes talking about the crowd on the plane. Most were very nice.

When I give my safety briefing, I do kind of a monologue. I cover all the safety features of course, but I also add a lot of humor. I have found that I catch their

attention with the first joke. Then they are listening. It also keeps me somewhat entertained and takes the monotony out of the job.

Chapter 46

As much as most of my passengers are very polite and kind, there are always those few. We had them today.

I was telling Dianna about Bridezilla.

A young woman approached me at the door, and very acrimoniously told me we were not getting her wedding gown. I was so taken aback by her rude behavior. I retorted, "I have three others at home and not a need for yours."

It was a large garment bag that I was sure would not fit in the overhead and certainly not under the seat.

I tried to reassure her. "I don't think that will fit. I assure you that these are loaded last and first to come off. It will be in the jet way shortly after we land."

She became more infuriated. "It is NOT going down there. You are not getting my wedding gown."

Boarding time is not really the time to be arguing and her attitude was working my last nerve. I also heard divorce bells a ringing in her future.

"Maybe you should take another flight?" I suggested trying to make it clear she was not going to have control. If it didn't fit it was being checked.

She walked past me like an obstinate teen and went to her seat.

When I walked the cabin her garment bag was sticking out. I looked at her.

“Ma’am this has to be able to close.”

“It will close.” She snapped back.

I had enough. I looked at her and did not care that other passengers were present. We were about to close.

“Attitude is everything.” I told her. “If you had boarded this plane and asked for my help, I would have turned the plane upside down to accommodate you. I know how important that dress must be to you. But understand something, you do not tell me what happens on this aircraft, I tell you.”

Her demeanor completely changed. It is funny how they are brave one on one but not so when they are in the company of other passengers.

Chapter 47

Then, there was the usual passenger in the front who thinks he is the only one on the plane.

The people in the bulkhead cannot put their things anywhere but above in the overhead compartment. It is a small place for three people to fit their things. It is inconvenient to put them further down in the plane because they cannot deplane as quickly. God forbid it takes 6 minutes as opposed to 3.

Still, it is only polite that the person sitting in 2A put their things under the seat in front of them. It is a constant battle. They

get on board and hog the first bin. After all, they are global travelers!

Mr. Metro sexual boards and puts his crap in the first bin and proceeds to sit in 2A.

Although it was not a full flight, the front always tends to be full. As the passengers boarding the plane found there was not room and told me, I interceded.

I looked at 2A. "Could you please put your bag under the seat in front of you?" I asked him

He hesitated, as they often do.

"There is not a spot for these people, they do not have a seat in front of them and all things must be stowed."

He pointed to under his seat. "I already have a bag under there." He was not going to move.

I took his bag. "Okay I will gladly gate check this for you." I started toward the door.

He quickly stopped me. "I will move it down," he said in a very condescending tone.

I didn't care. It was time to close.

Chapter 48

Dianna poured drinks as I served. It was nice to have the help. We could also chat after.

2A ordered white wine. I served him.

As I walked back to the cabin, thinking I had served everyone that was awake, someone tapped me on the behind!

I turned to see who would be so brazenly rude. A man looked at me and ordered a coke. I turned to him. I was upset. "Sir, next time you think that you can touch me that way, you had better have a tennis bracelet for me in the other hand."

It was more productive than slapping him.

This was definitely a rough crowd. Not the usual clientele for Rapid City.

As I approached the galley, 2A ordered another white wine. I returned with the drink and the machine to charge him. He looked at me bewildered.

“I am sitting in first class and you are going to charge me?”

I looked around to see how I had missed that we had a first class section. I will sometimes joke with the passengers in the first two seats that they are in first class, but it is hardly that at all.

I tried to be polite.

“Sir, I am sorry but this is company policy.”

He looked at me as though he was trying to side step garbage. "Okay, I will get a drink coupon."

Geese, the creep had a coupon! He was not even going to have to crack open his wallet.

When he reached inside, he pulled out two drink coupons. He handed them to me as though he was giving a biscuit to a dog. He would not look at me.

I took a deep breath and returned to the galley where Dianna was standing. We had drawn the curtain.

I told her about 2A trying while I was trying not to scream.

"Don't you know?" she asked. "He is behaving that way to overcompensate for a small penis."

I started to laugh. I could not stop.

Chapter 49

The flight from Washington-Dulles to Rapid City is 1188 nautical miles. The flight time should be close to four hours.

Grant had been tracking the flight. It should have been close to Rapid City Regional by now.

We were sitting in the back of the plane. Most of the passengers had fallen asleep. We had the last two seats on the right side of the plane.

I looked at my watch. "You, know we should have been there by now. And I did

not hear any announcements from the '*front office.*' I said to Dianna.

"You are right. They usually make an announcement about 20-30 minutes as we start to descend."

I remembered how tired Captain Miller looked when he boarded. He had taken the red eye in this morning. His duty time in was 7 am. It was only 6:30 but he was just about illegal. It really did not matter if he was legal to fly he had not had much rest during the day.

I had a fleeting thought that they might have fallen asleep. Dianna could almost read my thoughts by looking at my face.

"You don't think?" she asked.

"I don't know. No! Even if Jack wanted to doze off he would have let Ken know."

Dianna gave me a look I did not want to even fathom thinking about. "What if...they fell asleep?"

"I will go up there and call them. I'll be right back."

I went to the front of the plane. I picked up the phone and pressed the pilot button. No response. I pressed it again, still nothing. I called to the phone in the back of the plane. Dianna picked it up.

"This is not good. They are not responding." I said. "Come up here, please, I have an idea."

Dianna was there quickly. "Are they sleeping?" she asked. I wondered if I was as pale as she was right now.

"That's the only explanation." I said to her. "I am going to bang on the door. I want you to do some things in the galley to

detract from the noise I might make. I don't want anyone upset."

Chapter 50

Dianna began working in the galley as I stood in front of the flight door. I hit it with my fist and then lifted my foot to hit the door again. All, while I had the phone in my hand and calling to them.

In a few moments I heard Jack. He sounded groggy. "Olivia?" he asked.

"Yes, Jack are you guys okay?"

He recovered quickly it seemed. I could also hear Ken talking.

"There are a few things we need to take care of here. I will be back with you in a moment." He said with haste.

I knew he did not want to let on, but I could hear it in his voice. For a moment I felt that all was okay because they were awake.

Dianna approached me. "Did they fall asleep?" she asked knowing the answer.

"I think we are going to be okay. Just think they are off course. I will hear back soon, I am sure."

By this time, some of the passengers had awokened. As I walked through the cabin one stopped me. He was sitting in the exit row. He was looking at his watch.

"Shouldn't we be there by now?"

"We may have had a strong head wind," I lied. I certainly did not want to cause any alarm. I knew he did not believe me.

Just then, the phone beeped. It was the pilots.

“Olivia, we dozed off. We are over 200 miles off course. There is a concern about the fuel. We have an emergency situation.”

I already knew the nature of the emergency.

“How much time, Jack?” I asked.

“Only about five minutes, it will be quick.”

I waited for any special instructions.

“There is a wooded area below. We are going to do our best to glide her into an area where the trees will help. When you see the light go on again, give the brace command. Do not get up for anything!”

Jack made the catastrophic announcement to the cabin. There was panic, but their attention was on me, as Jack instructed.

There was barely anytime.

I turned to Dianna. "Please sit in the rear jump seat. I can see you better and I will need your help."

As I watched her make her way to the back of the cabin I felt guilty for having put her here in the first place, but equally as grateful to have her support.

I strapped myself into the jump seat, and prayed.

Chapter 51

The next few moments seemed to last a lifetime. I thought at this time I would be thinking a lot of different things. All I could think was how was this going to end. If all of us would perish, oh God let it be quick.

I had commanded the brace position. The passengers had followed every command. I did not see one head looking up. They were crying and praying, but they were not moving from the position I told them to assume.

Dianna looked up at the exact moment.
She could always feel me. Our eyes locked
and no words were needed.

Chapter 52

The plane hit something and bounced up again. This happened three times before we came to a halt. I thought it must have been trees in order for us not to stop.

It was several moments of horrifying silence when the plane finally rested. People looked up but they were reprehensibly quiet. They must have been in shock.

The flight deck rang the phone. It was Ken. “Don’t open the doors over the wing. The fuel tanks could go at any time. Open the

front cabin door. Have Dianna go out and direct the passengers far from the plane. Let me know when all of them are safely off the plane. Then, I will open the flight deck door."

Dianna was at the front of the plane before Ken had finished his instructions. I told her and opened the main cabin door.

The plane had rested on the left side and was not more than four or five feet from the ground.

I helped Dianna get out of the plane and to the ground.

I looked at the passengers. I took the phone off the hook and instructed them.

"Please get out of your seats one at a time. If all of you move at once, it will throw off the balance of the aircraft. We

will get out safely if you take your time.
Leave everything.”

I prayed I was right.

One by one I helped the passengers get off the plane. As they left I said, “Get out, get away!”

Once the ground, I could hear Dianna echoing my instructions.

Chapter 53

Once everyone was off the plane, I walked the aisle. I opened the door to the bathroom.

I returned to the flight deck door. I knocked, "Everyone is gone, Ken."

He lit the button for the pilots on the phone. Why was he doing this? What I had feared from the beginning was coming to light. Something had happened to Jack!

“Olivia, get off the plane. I will join you in a few minutes. Jack did not survive. I don’t want you to see him.”

I could feel the tears stinging my eyes. But, this was not a time to cry. “Please open the door, Ken.”

It took a moment but he finally did.

Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw. Jack was pinned to his seat by a branch that had come through the cockpit window.

I could not breathe.

“I did not want you to see him.” Ken said firmly, regretting he had opened the door.

I looked at Ken. He had Jack’s blood splattered on him. Without hesitation I went to the galley and retrieved all the paper towels. I don’t know why, but all I could think was that the passengers could

not see Ken this way. I was trying desperately to process what I had just seen.

When I returned to the flight deck, Ken had already removed the slaying branch from Jack.

“I cannot leave him here. This thing could blow any minute. You get out and care for the people on the ground. That’s an order.”

I moved to the door and allowed gravity to get me to the ground. I waited there as I watched Ken taking Jacks body from the Captain’s chair. I was supposed to be away from the plane but I knew it would be hard for Ken to do this alone.

I looked over to Dianna. She knew what had happened, I was sure. She kept ushering the passengers further from the

plane. It was very dark and I was grateful for that.

I waited and helped him move the lifeless body of our Captain to the ground away from the passengers.

Once Ken had Jack covered, I felt a fleeting moment of complete paralyzation. I could not cry. I felt remarkably in control. I tend to go through trauma almost effortlessly. I knew this would hit me, but not now. There was too much to do, other people to save.

Chapter 54

Grant began to pace. It was close to eleven and the plane should have landed at 10:30.

He called Olivia's phone again. Nothing. He called the company but was not successful in finding anyone who could answer his question.

He was walking past the room that Jacob occupied when he noticed he was sitting on his bed absorbed in a photo. He stopped for a moment.

Jacob noticed him as he was about to walk away.

“I’m sorry.” Grant said. “I did not mean to stare. I am having a rough night.”

“That’s okay. Have you heard from Olivia?”

Grant shook his head.

“She will call soon Dad.” He tried to reassure him. “She said she would call as soon as she landed.”

Grant did not want to worry him. Jacob seemed to be pretty intent on the photo in his hand.

Chapter 55

“You can come in.” Jacob said. “I want to show you this.”

Grant entered the room and sat on the bed next to his son. Jacob was holding a much worn picture of he and Grant at a cub scout outing. He had not seen that picture since long before Jacob disappeared.

“Do you remember that day?” Jacob asked.

Grant smiled. “Of course. That was the pine wood derby. I remember you won first prize.”

"It was because of you, Dad." Jacob said. "You worked on that car till it flew." He moved to the nightstand and opened the drawer. He pulled out a 'first prize' ribbon.

Grant could not believe he had kept it. He did not know what to say.

"I looked at this every day for the first year after you were gone." Jacob said as he held the ribbon which was frayed.

Jacob looked at his father. His eyes were filled with tears. "I thought you didn't care. Mom told me you left and had another family. Why did she do that?"

Grant was at a loss for words. Although Shelby was deceased, for the moment he hated her memory. He had to put that aside. It would not serve Jacob now.

"I cannot give you a good answer, Jacob. People can be sick in many different ways,

rest assured, she did love you. It was her feelings for me that she acted on. I am sure she did not know how much she hurt you.”

“What about you? She really hurt you.”

Grant put his arm around Jacob. “I am not going to lie about it. It killed me. There was not a day that I did not long to see you. I did not know what had happened to you. That was the worse feeling of all.”

He thought about Max Diamond.

“In fact, you don’t know this but we have Olivia to thank for finally bringing us together.”

Jacob looked confused.

“She had a passenger on her plane that became very ill. She helped him and he turned out to be an attorney. Long story

short, he was able to find you when no one else could.”

“Really?” Jacob was surprised.

“Yes.” Grant said. He thought about Olivia. Another twenty minutes had passed, still no word from her.

“I cannot wait any longer. I have to find out where she is and if she is okay.”

As he stood up from the bed, his cell phone rang.

Chapter 56

I was somehow able to gain composure. Ken needed my help.

I looked at Ken. He was technically in charge. He was young. Probably late 30's the most.

He did not know Jack very well. However, both of us knew him well enough to know that he was leaving a family behind.

He took me by the arm. "There is nothing we can do for him. We have a plane full of people who need us now. They have survived the crash. Now, they need to

survive here," he looked to the sky, "where ever the hell we are!"

I was instantly panicked. "What do you mean?"

Ken looked at me. "ATC had tried to contact us several times. We had dozed off."

What he did not want to tell me is that Jack kept saying he was fine. Ken decided to nap and Jack also fell asleep. I could see the burden of this dilemma in his eyes. I could only imagine how responsible he felt. He was holding it together well.

"When you knocked it woke both of us. By that time we were off course by almost 200 miles."

"But, surely they know where we are!" I exclaimed.

Ken looked somber. "No, we lost contact. When we tried before the 'landing' we were not able to reach Rapid City."

"What now?" I asked hoping he had some encouragement for us.

"I am going to keep trying to contact someone." He said. "But, the power is low and I am not very secure I can."

"So, we survived the 'landing' but now, we might not survive the elements?"

His look told me everything. "First we build a fire." He said.

Chapter 57

Grant was getting dressed as Jacob turned on the television. Missing flight #5923 already made the news.

The pictures of the crew flashed. His stomach turned when he saw Olivia's face. His knees became weak at the thought of losing her. He quickly refocused.

At least he could do something. He did not have to wait for search teams to find her. He decided that once he knew that the tower was not able to reach the pilots for

over 20 minutes. They could have been asleep for over 30 minutes.

They had gone off course. They had to have realized it once they finally awakened. Fuel would have been a major concern at that point. Somehow they landed.

Olivia would have known. Maybe she was the one to wake the pilots. She was very astute to the time a flight should take.

She was just lost. He would not accept anything else.

Chapter 58

While Ken worked on the fire with a few of the other passengers, I returned to the plane with Dianna. I know not a bright move on our part.

I took out coats and threw them to Dianna who stood at the bottom of the aircraft. I found what little we had in snack boxes and put them in a garbage bag.

As I went through the cabin, I saw the garment bag that held the wedding gown. I'm not sure why, but I took it out and threw it to the ground.

I also removed my bags. I had a lunch bag with only a few things in it. At least it was something. We would have to ration the food. Hopefully, it would not be for long. We did not have that much.

We worked quickly. I even took out the medical bag and the first aid box. There was a drawer of liquor. This could be used for sterilizing any wounds that the passengers may have suffered.

It must have been only three minutes and we were on our way back to where everyone else was gathered. I am sure we were not missed.

Chapter 59

When we returned, the fire was burning. Ken had moved everyone far from the aircraft.

He questioned us upon our arrival.

“Where have you been? Please don’t tell me you went back in there?” he asked, as he looked at the bags of food and clothing. He already knew.

“What the hell? Have you lost your minds? Don’t go back there!” he said firmly. “That plane could blow at any minute. His tone became more severe. “I mean it. That shit is insignificant. I don’t want to lose anyone else!”

Dianna and I looked at each other. He was right, and justifiably upset.

Chapter 60

We were fortunate that a nurse was on the flight.

Dianna and I followed her as she helped the passengers with their wounds. Most were superficial, much to my surprise.

We had rationed the snacks that had been on board. Fortunately there were at least 50 cans of soft drinks. We had 12 bottles of water. That would have to be rationed.

It was cold. We sat close to the fire.

There was one child on the plane. She was very tired and cold. The whole ordeal had

scared her and she was crying as she clung to her mother.

I had handed Bridezilla her garment bag. She appeared to be surprised.

Once it seemed as though everyone was settled for the time being, I walked off. I felt a need to be alone.

I still wondered why I had not seen any indication of Felix.

Chapter 61

I was freezing but I needed to be alone. I wanted to have some distance to think. I looked around at our 'camp.' I was angry and upset.

The powers that be, whose focus is on profit, had caused this. Ken was as fatigued as Jack. The long hours had caught up with both of them at the same time. Now, we were all in danger. It was nothing short of miraculous that we had only one fatality, one too many, absolutely preventable. Jack had saved us and it cost him his young life.

I needed to be alone for a minute or I was going to lose it. I told Dianna that I needed to go to the bathroom and would return shortly.

I sat on a large rock and looked around.

It was dark and I wondered how anyone would find us. I knew by now that Grant had been informed of our dilemma. It was not news to him, I was sure. He had been tracking my flight, as he always would. He knew long before the company called him that we were missing.

I pictured the company ushering the awaiting families into a room to inform them of our predicament.

I shuddered when I thought about my daughter. She had to know by now. How I wished I could let her know that I had survived.

I wondered what Grant was doing at this very moment.

I could feel him, and I almost felt worse for him than myself. Although he did have one advantage, he had recourses.

We were trapped in this vast land where no one knew where we were. He also did not know, but I was sure that he was doing everything he could to find us.

Chapter 62

Grant stood for a moment after the phone call. He was not going to sit idly by and wait. He needed to get to Rapid City. They could not have been too far from there. He needed to get there quickly, relying on a commercial flight was not an option.

He looked at Jacob. “I will be leaving, Jacob. I have to do something.”

“I want to come with you, Dad.” He quickly replied.

"Jacob, I don't know what I will be doing yet. I may even get a helicopter and look for them myself. I don't want you in any danger."

The young man was insistent.

"I can't just sit here. Please let me come."

Grant was torn. But, he did not want or need any additional uncertainties.

"I'm sorry, Jacob. It is better if you stay here. I think you are old enough and mature enough to stay here. In the morning I will have someone come by for you, if I am not back."

He picked up the phone and dialed Admiral Bannister.

Chapter 63

Grant was waiting at the regional airport for the pilot of the Gulfstream.

He could be in Rapid City in a couple of hours. If Olivia had been located, he would be there to see her. If not, he would go out and look himself.

His phone rang and he looked expecting it to be the pilot. Instead, it was an unknown number, from a Chicago area code. Although he usually did not answer those, this might have something to do with Olivia.

“Grant Devreaux.” He answered.

“Hello Grant,” the male voice he did not recognize was hesitant. “This is Pat Donnelly, we don’t know each other. My wife and I are friends of Olivia.”

The sound of his name stirred some apprehensive feelings in Grant. *What the hell does he want?* Grant thought. Before he could respond Pat continued.

“I have heard, and I want to help.”

“Thanks, but I am not sure what you can do?”

“What are you doing right now, Grant?” he asked.

“I am in South Carolina; I was able to get a private ride to Rapid City.”

“I will meet you there,” he said without hesitation. I can fly a chopper.”

“Bell 206?” Grant asked.

“Yes,” Pat replied as he was boarding the last flight of the night to Rapid City from Chicago. He would meet Grant at the airport.

Grant held his phone in amazement over the phone call. It could help if he had Pat with him.

The pilot, Graham Tolliver, arrived. After the safety checks, they were ready to taxi. As he turned the plane toward the runway he looked to Grant and pointed out.

“There is a kid on a bike out there. Do you know who that is?”

Grant looked out the window. Jacob was approaching the hanger they had just left. He dropped his bike and ran toward the plane.

Grant opened the door. It was too late to make him return home. Too much precious time was already lost.

“I’m sorry Dad, I need to come. I care about what happens.”

Chapter 64

As I sat in a meditative state, Felix finally appeared. I wanted to cry.

“I have been looking for you.” I said with my voice quivering.

“I know.” He said.

“I know about GNS. It came from someone out of the blue. I should have known.”

Felix smiled.

“Are you God?” I asked him.

“Who you think I am, is more important, Olivia.”

I knew that even though he was not directly answering my question, it was not a game.

"I came to you that day on the plane because you asked for me."

He could see I was confused.

"You may not have known it in your conscious mind, but you called out for me to enter your life. You asked, and I came."

I listened as he gently continued.

"You see, Olivia, there was something missing or better put, something you were seeking."

I thought back to the day he entered my life. I was very different then. So much had happened since our meeting only two years ago.

“You were looking for that connection. It was lacking in your life. Once you began to make that connection to everything around you, your life changed.”

He was right.

“You know, in all this time that we have been together, you have never, until tonight, asked me for anything. I saw you struggle when you helped others.” He smiled. “I knew that about you from the very beginning.”

“Let me tell you about what is going on now. It is how we are all connected, and your part in that connection. That will help you understand what I am trying to say.”

Chapter 65

“Right now, unbeknownst to you, there are some wonderful things going on in the midst of all this,” he said as his hand scanned the crash site.

“Rocky had placed some flowers on your doorstep. He was watching TV when he heard of the missing plane. When he was there, a few of the neighbors saw him. Now, they are out there with candles, awaiting some news.”

“In Iowa, Sharon Brown has received a phone call from Janet Sills. She is telling her how she shared her story with you on your flight.”

“In Washington, Mary has called her sister to tell her how she remembered sitting next to you on a flight.”

“Meredith has called Reginald Catterson.”

He hesitated. He knew that she had ‘broken’ the rules of confidentiality.

“It’s okay, Olivia.” He has gathered his boys and they are keeping a vigil till you are safe.”

“People in the town of Moline have gathered at churches, pubs, homes, watching the progress of this case.”

“Teddy McBride started a program in his community for hiring disabled vets. He supports it with the winnings from the lottery. He has posted blogs on Facebook, Twitter, and his own website about the predicament of flight 5923.”

"Daniel has gathered his children around the dinner table and they are praying for you. He told his children how the two of you always talk in the van."

"And then, there is Elizabeth Miller, Captain Miller's wife."

My heart sank when he mentioned her name. I had thought all night about the family he left behind.

"She knows. She is still connected to her husband. It is much like that special connection you have to Grant. But, she knows it is different now."

Felix could see that I was about to lose it.

"Then, there is Grant. You do not even have to ask about the mountains he will move to find you. Remember love...not fear."

I looked at Felix. There was nothing I could add. This was one of those moments where the best words are the ones that are not said.

Then, he took my hands in his. I was surprised because had never touched me before. But then, I had not really made myself as vulnerable as I did tonight.

He stood before me and looked into my eyes. He had such soft hands. The gentleness and warmth of his touch brought a comfort I have never known. I closed my eyes and let the quietness of his presence surround me like a peaceful blanket. I looked down at his hands and closed my eyes.

“Remember, Olivia, you are never alone. Everything is happening as it was meant to be.”

When I opened my eyes my hands were empty. I was once again alone, but I knew, not really. I was completely in harmony with everything around me.

Chapter 66

Grant stood with the officials from Blue Sky Airlines, members of the FAA and the NTSB. They were trying to locate the aircraft.

He looked up to see Pat Donnelly enter the room. He thought he would never feel as though he wanted to see him. But, tonight he was a welcome presence.

“What did they find out?” he asked Grant.

Grant shook his head. “You know a lot of talk, but nothing tangible.”

“What are you thinking? I know what I would be doing if it were my wife.” He said.

“You said you can fly a chopper?” Grant asked.

Pat nodded.

“Let’s go do it. I cannot sit here. They have some up there, but I cannot wait.”

Within 30 minutes, Grant, Pat, and Jacob were boarding the helicopter.

Just as Grant sat in the seat a text came through. It was from Olivia! It read: *I love you...GNS means God Never Sleeps! What if...Felix is God!*

At first he was elated! For some reason she could contact him. Then, all too soon he realized that it was one of those rare occurrences where the text arrives hours after it was sent.

He had to find her.

Once they were airborne they were looking in much the same places as the search parties already canvassed.

Grant looked again at the text message. Would this be the last thing he would have from her?

For some reason, at that very moment he remembered when he had been sleeping. He remembered the movie. He remembered seeing Morgan Freeman telling him to look further north. Only it was not in the movie. He was not decked out in all white. He was wearing a wool blazer, vest and a Fedora.

What if...no it could not be. But, he knew in his gut that he needed to change directions.

He looked at Pat. "Let's go further north."

“That’s crazy, Grant. No way would they be there!”

Pat could see by the look on Grants face there would not be any way he could be convinced otherwise.

“Okay.” He agreed.

Pat was losing faith in their mission. He looked at Grant and Jacob. He was not sure what they would find. He feared that at this point they would only find wreckage. The area had mountains and trees. It would have been nothing short of a miracle if anyone survived.

Chapter 67

I returned to the site to see some incredible things happening.

‘Bridezilla’ had taken out her gown from the bag. She had wrapped it around the child that was on the flight.

When I approached the group the man in 2A came up to me.

“Are you okay? You have been gone a while. We were concerned.”

He was a different person from the one I had served in the plane. I guess he really

was not; just not the bully after this crushing experience.

"Are you scared?" he asked. It was apparent that he was frightened.

"Fear is not in my vocabulary, sir." I said trying to reinforce it within myself.

Even though he had been a real shit on the plane, I felt badly for him. "We are going to be alright. Trust me."

Its funny how when you are delivering cokes, you are treated as a bar maid at times. Now, since we were stranded out here in the middle of nowhere, our status increased.

I left him and found Dianna looking into the fire.

"It is getting late. It is getting colder. I need your help with the morale of the

passengers.” She said. I could see her fighting back tears.

I looked at her. “We are going to be okay. You need to be okay. Remember you have a date tomorrow.” I smiled at her. “I once dated a cop. They are trained to examine all the details. You want to date this guy.”

Dianna laughed. I looked at her seriously again. “I can feel him, Grant is close to us. I just know it Dianna.”

I could see that she believed me.

Before I sat down I looked to the ethereal sky. Out here, there were a multitude of stars. It was a brisk night. Although I am usually cold, for some reason, I felt comfortable. I felt calm in all the uncertainty that seemed to surround me. I felt safe. I knew in my heart that it was only a matter of time.

I sat at the fire for another thirty minutes, reviewing what Felix had told me about Grant. Something made me gaze at the heavens above.

Somewhere in the distance, it looked as though one of the stars was moving. I knew it was not a star. It came quickly and was approaching the site. In a few moments I could hear the bolstering sound of the helicopter. I jumped to my feet.

“He’s here!” I cried to Dianna. “It’s Grant! He has found us!”

Ken and the passengers rose to their feet and began cheering. Soon, the helicopter was low enough to feel the breeze from the motion of the propellers directly overhead.

In a few moments I saw Grant emerge from the chopper on a rope attached to a seat. I ran to him.

He released himself from the rope and ran to my arms.

"I am the one who trouble follows. What are you doing knee deep in this shit?" He said to me.

All the brave feelings I had been having turned to relief. Now, I could strip away the mask I had been wearing in front of my passengers.

I knew he had made the remark as a comic relief. Instead, it brought out all my ensnared emotions. I was crying as he took me in his arms. "We lost our Captain!"

Grant held me saying nothing. He could relate to what I was feeling about another crew member.

He surveyed the camp site. "Let's get everyone out of here." He said.

Chapter 68

Pat had radioed in the location of the crash site.

Within the hour, emergency vehicles were on the site. In less than two hours, all the passengers had been taken to a nearby hospital. Dianna, Ken, and I waited until everyone was gone.

There was room in one more van for Dianna and Ken. Once they were gone Grant looked at me.

Grant sent a radio message for Pat to return. Once he was overhead he looked at me.

“Let’s get out of here.”

“Can you sit on the seat?” he asked me. He already knew the answer.

I shook my head. I was shaking and did not want to be lifted to the chopper alone.

“Okay, we can both sit on it. Just hold on tight.” He instructed.

I held him snugly, as we were lifted to the chopper. Dawn was breaking. It was going to be a beautiful sunrise.

I looked down one more time. I saw the remnants of our plane. I saw Felix standing there, beside it. He was waving. I watched as I was lifted to safety.

I looked at Grant. “I see Felix. He is down by the plane. But, I know I am the only one who sees him.”

Grant smiled. "Don't be too sure about that. For right now, let's go home." He pulled me close to his chest and kissed the top of my head.

I wondered what he meant.

My glance returned to Felix who was becoming smaller as I left the ground. As he faded into the earth below, I wondered if this was the last time I would ever see him.

Just as some words are better not said, there are questions, better not asked.

In time, when we are ready, the answers will be revealed.

A Note from the Author

Thank you!

I hope that you have enjoyed this series. There is so much more to tell. I plan on writing more, because that is just what I do. I fly and I write. Please feel free to share. I have included my website at the bottom of this page. I would love nothing more than to hear from you.

Due to new FAA rulings, accidents such as described in What if... will be avoided.

Did I 'expand' the truth in this book for the sake of the story? Somewhat. Do I apologize for it? No. That's just not Polly Anna's style.

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Other books by Michelle Post

The Spirits of Nature

Kindred Spirits

When the Ceibo Tree Blooms

In The Absence of Joy

The Grace of a Woman

The Sky is Only the Beginning

Tales in the Sky

Come Fly With Me

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05 March 2018



Here you have it.
The third in the
series. This was
only supposed to be
a trilogy but I am
hearing that I need
to write more. Only

you can tell me that.

Join Olivia and Felix again for more
adventures. Now, Olivia may have
more answers to who her mysterious
friend Felix really is and why he chose
her .

Grant and Olivia have thier share of
personal situations as well as what they
experience in the sky.

Enjoy!

Michelle Post

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